

## Danbury BOE Workshop/ September 15, 2020

Ms. Cooper called meeting to order @: 6:03 p.m.

Attendance: G. Cooper, Chairperson, R. Jannelli, K. Conetta, A. Spallino,

L. Daly, A. Russo, K. Hodgdon, R. Chaleski, K. Molinaro

Absent: J. Britton, J. DaSilva

CABE Facilitator: N. Caruso

Ms. Cooper made opening remarks and introduced Nick Caruso. Mr. Caruso continued meeting and reviewed Roles and Responsibilities of Board.

Discussion ensued.

BOE expressed a need for Dr. Sal to prepare a presentation of exactly how today's classroom is conducted. The purposes to educate this Board on the impact of teaching and learning for our students.

BOE also asked that Dr. Sal develop talking points for the Board to help parents and educators understand the impact of this pandemic as it relates to decisions made daily by our administration.

Ms. Cooper thanked Mr. Caruso and the entire BOE for their dedication to our students and staff.

Motion made to adjourn @ 7:56 p.m. by K. Conetta, Second: A. Spallino

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Kathleen Molinaro, Secretary

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2020 SEP 24 P 3 15

BY: JRC

**DANBURY BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING**  
**WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 9, 2020 - 7:00 PM**  
**VIRTUAL MEETING VIA ZOOM**

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2020 SEP 24 P 3 15

BY: JRC

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

The Chairperson, G. Cooper, called the meeting to order at 7:01 pm and those assembled recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

**ROLL CALL**

Present: Rachel Chaleski, Kate Conetta, Gladys Cooper, Joseph DaSilva, Richard Jannelli, Albert Russo, Amy Spallino, Kathryn Hodgdon, Kathleen Molinaro, Loren Daly  
Absent: Joseph Britton  
Also Present: Dr. Pascarella, Courtney Leborious, Kelly Truchsess, Kevin Walston, Dr. Casimiro, Kim Thompson

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

- Dameisha Moore
  - I have a few concerns regarding the school system and Mr. Hanna. How do you intend to handle the threats that Mr. Joe Hanna made? Threats of bullying and threats made to families. What is your stance on bullying? During the Principal's Breakfast, Mr. Donovan said that he was aware of the behavior of Mr. Hanna before the newspaper article. When did you all become aware of Mr. Hanna's actions? Why was this information withheld from the students and their families? Were you aware of prior misconduct at past employers of Mr. Hanna? I am looking for accountability here. Who is responsible for hiring Mr. Hanna? We the people deserve to hear publicly who this is and does he/she or them share the same views as Mr. Hanna? Will there be training to directly address these issues? Why was Mr. Hanna given the option of resigning? Moving forward, what is the plan to prevent the hiring of such individuals? Why are we not addressing the racial tension that is obvious in the school system with teachers?
- Donna Bosworth
  - I am writing to the Board to ask what mitigating strategies and resultant tests have been conducted within our buildings, in preparation for any potential, partial or full return of our staff and students. The following guidelines come from the CDC:
    - Evaluate the building and its mechanical and life safety systems to determine if the building is ready for occupancy, such as hazards associated with prolonged facility shutdown such as mold growth or issues with stagnant water systems, and take appropriate remedial actions.
    - Ensure that ventilation systems in your facility operate properly. There have been concerning reports of Legionnaires' disease across schools throughout the country.

- Consider taking steps to improve ventilation in the building, in consultation with an HVAC professional, based on local environmental conditions (temperature/humidity) and ongoing community transmission in the area
- Increase the percentage of outdoor air, (e.g., using economizer modes of HVAC operations) potentially as high as 100%.
- Improve central air filtration: Increase air filtration to as high as possible without significantly diminishing design airflow. The test of each system should show CO2 levels below 800ppm\*
- Consider using portable high-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) fan/filtration systems to help enhance air cleaning (especially in higher-risk areas).
- Ensure exhaust fans in restroom facilities are functional and operating at full capacity when the building is occupied.
- Consider using ultraviolet germicidal irradiation (UVGI) as a supplemental technique to inactivate potential airborne virus in the upper-room air of common occupied spaces, in accordance with industry guidelines.

Most of our buildings are old and don't have this infrastructure set up - has the CARES money been allocated to remediate these issues? We can't simply change filters and hope that it is enough to protect our staff, and our children, especially as we see the rates of cases in the young rising at an alarming rate. The CDC guidelines also specifically note that plans should include all employees in plans — for example, management, staff, utility employees, relief employees, janitorial staff, and maintenance staff. I feel that this mandate has not been followed, in regards to these issues, or the many others encompassed in the re-opening plan. There has been an absence of teacher voice in our reopening plans, which I hope that the Board seeks to rectify, as we embark on the challenges that this new school year presents.

\*[https://chps.net/sites/default/files/file\\_attach/CHPS\\_COVID-19\\_Whitepaper\\_June2020.pdf](https://chps.net/sites/default/files/file_attach/CHPS_COVID-19_Whitepaper_June2020.pdf)

- Anne Riddle (submitted after public participation was read)
  - As a Danbury Public School teacher and a resident of Danbury I'd like to compliment the Board and DPS administration on the Board's presentation, last BOE meeting, on the science of the virus and the professional opinion of our DPS healthcare professionals. With that being said, I want to have confidence that the district will be providing all staff and students with personal protective equipment in sufficient quantities and quality to protect all of us as we continue educating Danbury's students. We need this assurance to confidently enter our buildings. The amount and quality is crucial information for parents and staff. Information so far has been vague. Children need to be outfitted with clean, new masks whenever necessary. We cannot rely on washing masks - new information in the press has stated that cleaning masks may not be sufficient to block transmission of the virus. AS a teacher I am asking for the specifics to be assured that it will be safe to resume any in-person teaching and that the district is scrupulously following safety precautions during a pandemic. In addition, I am requesting that

the district inform all employees when a staff member or student tests positive for the virus while respecting the privacy of the individual. It recently came to my attention that some staff members tested positive for the virus but teachers were not informed. We depend on the district to disseminate this information to staff and families so each of us can make decisions on our health.

### **CONSENT CALENDAR**

MOTION: K. Conetta moved, seconded by J. DaSilva that the Board of Education approves the items on the Consent Calendar, Exhibit 20-82 through Exhibit 20-90, as recommended:

#### **MINUTES**

6/9/20 Special Board Meeting (6:00 pm)	20-82(pg.4)
6/24/20 Special Board Meeting	20-83(pg.14)
6/24/20 Regular Board Meeting	20-84(pg.15)
7/22/20 Board Workshop	20-85(pg.26)
7/29/20 Special Board Meeting	20-86(pg.30)
8/12/20 Special Board Meeting	20-87(pg.37)
8/19/20 Policy Committee	20-88(pg.50)
8/21/20 Policy Committee	20-89(pg.51)
8/26/20 Special Board Meeting	20-90(pg.52)

R. Chaleski requested that the 6/24/2020 minutes reflect which members voted and to continue this specific documentation moving forward.

10 Votes Yes:

Rachel Chaleski, Kate Conetta, Gladys Cooper, Joseph DaSilva, Richard Jannelli, Albert Russo, Amy Spallino, Kathryn Hodgdon, Kathleen Molinaro, Loren Daly

J. Britton was not present to vote.

**Motion passed at 7:10 pm.**

### **EMPLOYEE REPRESENTATIVE**

- Erin Daly
  - Efforts that teaching staff have been putting in for opening with Distance Learning and two weeks prior with PD. Teachers are tasked with a ridiculous amount of workload on their shoulders. Reminded the community to please be cognizant, understanding and gentle. Teachers are getting comments and directives from parents when things are not going so great with technology. Teachers are working out the tweeks with technology issues. Some are not even district issues, such as Google Classroom. The teachers are the ones getting the communication and oftentimes getting the direct blame for issues that are beyond their control. Teachers are working an incredible amount to make sure parents and

students are up and connected. Commended teacher effort and amount of collaboration just to get up and running. Incredibly proud of teachers and their efforts to make sure students are getting the best education possible.

- G. Cooper thanked E. Daly for her leadership. Recognized that everyone is working hard and understands that not everything will fall in line right away.

## **PRESENTATION**

- Facility Update - Mitigation Strategies
- C. Leborious updated the Board:
  - Administrative staff, Custodial staff, Secretarial staff and Safety Advocates are in the buildings. Teachers are invited in if they choose to work remotely from their classrooms.
  - Running food service distribution from elementary schools.
  - Just got approval from the State to continue running waiver from the Summer Seamless Program. Any child in Danbury can show up for a meal and family members can pick up on their behalf.
  - Food distribution is held Monday through Friday from 12pm to 2 pm at all elementary schools.
  - K. Walston, C. Leborious, R. Jalbert, R. Torres and K. O'Dowd set up building templates that included every aspect that the individual principal leadership needed to address from arrival to departure.
  - Dr. Pascarella arranged for a consultant to work with the team to advise about signage and flow protocol based on the size of the hallway and the particular setup of the building.
  - Signage has been set up in each building.
  - Spaced out everyone in classrooms to the maximum possible amount.
  - Addressed egress of movement from when students arrive.
  - Set up templates, met with the principals and then did building walkthroughs to clarify any questions that principals had for their particular space.
  - Open up as many points for arrival and dismissal (open doors) as possible.
  - When we open, secondary schools will grab breakfast to eat in class and grab and go home for lunch.
  - Elementary will grab and eat in the classroom/cafe for breakfast and lunch (depending on the infrastructure of the building).
  - Maintain cohorting for recess.
  - Isolation rooms with windows and if no windows, airflow filters were purchased. Swapped out doors that did not have windows to ones with windows to safely monitor students.
  - Took out extraneous furniture in staff lounges and offices so no congregating in mass.
  - City ventilation has been working with the district. Went through and checked all handling units, belts, monitors, controllers, filter racks and more. Replaced with MERV 8 filters and where appropriate, MERV 13 filters. In addition, adjusted all building controls to flush air an hour earlier

in the morning and two hours after closing so there is more constant air flow than normal. Also checked all exhaust fans and did performance maintenance including replacing belts and motors as needed.

- Used a device to measure CO2 within a given room. Levels were well below 500 in most cases and where they weren't, there were adjustments made to the airflow. Plans to revisit as staff and students return as CO2 will be different with more bodies in the rooms.
- Capital plans to address upgrades that are needed.
- Custodial staff have done an amazing job with how spotless the buildings looked. They spent so much time painting, cleaning and getting the schools ready. Do still have furniture to pull out of buildings and put in storage.
- PPE, sanitizer, disinfectant, electrostatic sprayers, desk shields, tents, high school science desk, water faucets, paper towel dispensers, storage and wall dispensers for sanitizer have been purchased and distributed.
- Limited/restricted access to buildings for essential employees only.
- Established new cleaning protocols for bathrooms and will hire additional seasonal custodial staff.
- Updated fire drills and lockdowns with directional floor signage.
- Each school established a Reopening and Safety Committee with representation from all members of the school community.
- Conducted training series: handwashing, mask wearing, distancing, fire safety protocols, appropriate cleaning and use of supplies and blood borne pathogens.
- PPE has been distributed to nursing staff.
- Special PPE equipment has been purchased for staff who work with special needs students (gowns, gloves, face shields, etc).
- Continue to review airflow with building staff.
- Check signage placement and make adjustments as needed.
- Revisit furniture and room setup based on the number of students returning.
- K. Truchsess updated the Board:
  - Working with the builder at Granville building which will house eight preschool classes for this year. Try to have completed by the first week of October. Working with the IT team and security. Also customizing areas and spaces to make sure we have sufficient space for OT and PT. The maintenance team is on standby to help move in furniture as quickly as possible. Some finalizing things that still need to occur.
- R. Jalbert updated the Board:
  - Working diligently school by school making sure social distance stickers are on the floors. Approximately 200 pieces of plexiglass dividers have been put up for Secretaries and Safety Advocates. Schools are looking cleaner and nicer than ever with all the painting that has been done.
  - Goal is to deep clean every Wednesday of every room. Two step process. Clean first and then disinfect. All touch points, light switches, door knobs, bathrooms and desktops.

- Temp custodian job has been posted. When we go to hybrid, extra custodians will be hired to work at all schools to help with cleaning, specifically the bathrooms. Bathrooms will be cleaned twice a day as opposed to just at the end of the night.
- K. Walston updated the Board:
  - True teacher voice will be found in reopening plans of all of our schools. Every school has a local reopening committee. These plans will come alive in all 18 schools in the district with the support of teachers, safety advocates, nurses, paraprofessionals, secretaries, etc. As part of this implementation process, asked principals to make sure teachers and paras have appropriate representation. Everyone will have the voice they deserve as plans are being implemented in the schools.
  - Dr. Pascarella thanked Sean and Antonio for their help from the City. Good team approach:
  - K. Conetta asked for an update on the OSB facility.
  - Dr. Pascarella stated that the Matrix is still moving forward. State department building groups are comfortable with the idea.
  - C. Leborious stated that we are still on track for the OSB project. Funding has been approved for September of 2021. Project has not shifted in its timeline.
  - Dr. Pascarella stated that the district is trying to look for other sites that may be available for at least two years of construction to put supplies and added storage.
  - R. Jalbert stated that the city is in the process of finalizing the project and selecting an architect. Has met with three architectural firms to show them around OSB.
  - R. Jannelli asked if there is a way to get a cost analysis on how much is spent on pandemic supplies. C. Leborious stated that she can get that information and share it.
  - R. Jannelli is there any way to estimate what the labor cost is attributed to internal staff with man hours. C. Leborious will work with R. Jannelli to get that information.

### **ACTION ITEMS**

MOTION: R. Chaleski moved, seconded by A. Spallino that the Board of Education table Action Items A through D until the next Board meeting.

10 Votes Yes:

Rachel Chaleski, Kate Conetta, Gladys Cooper, Joseph DaSilva, Richard Jannelli, Albert Russo, Amy Spallino, Kathryn Hodgdon, Kathleen Molinaro, Loren Daly

J. Britton was not present to vote.

**Motion passed at 7:45 pm**

A. Policy 1250 – Visits to the Schools

B. Policy 5141.8 - Face Masks/Coverings

C. Policy 6114.81 – Emergency Suspension of Policy During Pandemic

D. Policy 6114.82 – COVID Emergency Measures

### **SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORT**

- Opening School Report

Dr. Pascarella stated four goals for the first week of school:

- Get students connected
- Build relationships and community in the classroom
- Orient students to the norms, expectations, and tools that they will need to be successful in the digital environment

- Dr. Casimiro updated the Board:

- Tremendous amount of hard work being done. Commended teachers and administrators who put in extraordinary hours around the clock. Nights, weekends, and vacations.
- Planning and preparing for eight days of PD was no small feat. Receiving the PD was also not easy to do. A lot to take in and a lot of planning involved. Went relatively well with a lot of information in eight days.
- Our number one priority is connecting students and ensuring equity.
- Really good connectivity rates.
- Some initial glitches with Google Meets. Nationwide issue probably due to everyone using the education platform.
- Typical connectivity issues in terms of passwords. Teachers worked through the day to connect students and then circled back to students who did not connect in the classroom. Small amount of students missing in each class. Good deal of connectivity. Not too far off from what we would see in a normal beginning of the year setting.
- Big push on social emotional learning and building those relationships.
- Kindergarten orientation taking place this week. Principals have spoken of huge success in one on one walkthrough with technology with kindergarten students.
- Will take some time for students to understand how to navigate Google Classroom.
- New structures and organizational pieces. Teachers are walking through how to navigate that environment; how to find the links, weekly planner, course syllabus.
- Open Houses coming where teachers will walk parents through Google Classroom, how to get information and what to expect in terms of the weekly overview.
- Working on digital citizenship, understanding what a student responsibility is in a digital environment, how to navigate that environment responsibly, understanding cyber bullying, appropriate behavior and how to sift through lots of information.

- Over the next couple of days, teachers will really spend time working on this and as classes become ready and connected. Teachers will then start moving into more academic curricular pieces.
- Some students have already received their supplies. District purchased for students to be able to participate and utilize tools that they will need. Schools will schedule distribution times with families very soon if they have not done so yet.
- A couple issues with Google Hangout bombing where students had access to other classroom links. Will be addressing that with students and that is part of digital citizenship. These things will come up and will address as they surface.
- Issues in K-5 special areas. Instead of a teacher walking students down to Art, Music or PE, it's a virtual hand off. Working through practicing that with both students and teachers and making sure those Google Meet links are working.
- Wednesdays are primarily small group instructions days. Our program is a synchronous and asynchronous experience as well as some defined time for small group instruction. At the highschool level where FLEX is noted, there will be expectation for students to be completing asynchronous assignments on Wednesdays with plenty of opportunity to access small group instruction and one to one support with teachers. Important day for students to be able to do that.
- 40 minutes a day is dedicated to FLEX during the school year. Compacted that on Wednesdays to provide flexibility for students to receive small group instruction and also to complete asynchronous coursework as the year starts to progress.
- A. Mead updated the Board:
  - The Family and Community Engagement Center has spent time with parents who have questions on connectivity, how to navigate the different platforms being used as well as supporting central registration.
  - Deployed staff to help as interpreters at kindergarten orientation.
  - Thanked Staples who have provided over 500 bags of materials to go out to students in addition to what we already have purchased. Families were able to buy \$5 or \$10 dollar bags to distribute.
  - Able to add to Dr. Casimiro's Family and School Partnership Guide so teachers have more resources at their fingertips to connect with families.
  - Working to update the website. New resource page under Family and Community Resources with tutorials in different languages.
  - Childcare program begins at PAL next week with EdAdvance. Large uptick in family child care homes taking in more children. The Office of Early Childhood let the childcare providers that can only have school age children for a small time of the day, have them now for longer periods of time. This cohorts families together and children can get support while they are there.
  - The Priority School Grant and 21st Century Learning program will begin offering tutoring next week after school with certified teachers for students who have been identified as needing more help. Will roll out after the teacher's regular day, around 3:30 or 4:00 pm, to work with students who need more help.
  - Take over 150 calls a day from families looking for assistance.
- G. Jasmine updated the Board:

- Still seeing enrollment come in. Currently have about 130 kids in the queue who are still completing registration paperwork. Some kindergarten kids. Not a big surge like last year.
- Few hotspots in the district. Any parent who has reached out has been given access. Big push will be with Comcast and internet vouchers awarded from the State. Should be receiving more information on when we will receive vouchers next week. State was finalizing a deal with Comcast. Once that happens, will be able to hand out vouchers. Many families in need for better internet connection.
- Device distribution continues. Anyone who needs help, please visit the school's website to reach out to a technician. That is monitored on a daily basis.
- K. Wanzer updated the Board:
  - Administrators were pleasantly surprised with how many students were in attendance on the first day of Distance Learning. Overall rate of 90.4% across the district in attendance. A couple percentage points below a normal first day attendance.
  - Working around several procedures and protocols. State gave guidance last week in regards to more specific definitions and reporting on attendance. Imagine that this number will change as we go in and make corrections through 9/11/2020.
  - Seeing a higher rate than expected at 9-12 level. Pretty close to where they were last year. 4% point difference at elementary, slightly dipped below what we normally see. To be expected as the youngest learners are learning to navigate the new system. Working with elementary and secondary principals to see what protocols will be around attendance and how to identify students who are not engaged at all. Students who are not engaged at all need to be reported to the State. Will be closely tracking those numbers and reaching out to families.
- K. Truchsess updated the Board:
  - Beginning tomorrow SpEd will bring students in to conduct evaluations at RPMS as well as Cottage Street. Pre-school will be at Cottage Street and K-12 will be at RPMS, all using one floor. There will be one staff member and one student per class. PPE will be provided as well as sanitizer and lysol.
  - Scheduling one or two students per day to work with staff members with staggering start times. K. Truchsess as well as SpEd supervisors will be present and on site. Parents will drop students off at the door. Parents will be leaving students with staff members with a few rare exceptions of students with special needs.
  - Staff will walk the child down to the designated location. All things will be sanitized and cleaned between students. Students will receive appropriate breaks between evaluations.
  - 15 kids at RPMS on 9/10/2020. Seven or eight at Cottage Street.
  - One staff member for every student present and a few more with administrative oversight.
  - One step in bringing needier students in for programming required by law.
  - Working with K. O'Dowd and the Health Department with particular consideration to high need SpEd students, such as students in the self contained programs, and if we can bring in small cohorts of those students safely in October.

This is something the State has asked to give special consideration to. 1,700 SpEd students across the district with 300 of those being considered as high needs.

- Slight change in how evaluations are done. Typically School Psychologists don't do the academic testing, even though they are fully qualified to do so. In order to keep SpEd teachers, who typically do the evaluations, fully engaged with students during Distance Learning, it was decided to have the School Psychologists perform the evaluations. In the process of getting parents consent to continue this.
- K. Thompson updated the Board:
  - Just rounding the bend on completing teacher hiring with 113 teachers hired so far. Last year at this time 163 were hired.
  - All virtual onboarding went very smoothly. Figured out how to do ID cards remotely.
  - In addition, 30 building subs or interventionists are now in place. Serving primarily as substitutes on the occasions when needed in DL models.
  - Sub teaching pool is open with about 250 substitutes in there and in the process of continuing to stay in contact with them because they won't become active until students return to the hybrid model. They will receive training and video modules to keep them engaged.
  - Also onboarded 22 non-certified staff members outside of para and tutor ranks such as new nurses and other non-certified staff members.
  - Seen an uptick in para and tutor resignation. Some have found other positions in other career paths. Held back on filling those spots but working with K. Truchsess to pivot to in-person learning in whatever form it is that we have it and staff available to cover those needs.
  - Seasonal custodians will move slowly to bring them onboard with the idea to have them ready when students turn to in-person learning.
  - Not running ELP program because we are not in-person learning right now. Those employees have been furloughed. We can't maintain their status as active employees. Hopefully when we flip back to hybrid model, will be able to staff them again. Many are existing DPS employees. Will be at the ready when we move back to an in-person model with ELP.
  - Working very closely with union leaders of all kinds. Not just administrators but with non-certified staff leaders as well. All are back in schools on a full time schedule with the exception of Wednesday, except by invitation. Moving through the preparation process and helping schools get ready to welcome back students in some fashion in person. A lot of conversations, tweeking and listening to feedback about what we can do for them to feel comfortable and safe with being back in the buildings.
  - Quite a few staff members who are concerned with the impact their health conditions have on their ability to work in an in-person model. 100 employees requesting accommodations. Of that number, 61 are certified staff members requesting accommodation. 24 at the elementary and 37 at secondary level. In addition, 36 non-certified staff members similarly request accommodations. Requests range from enhanced PPE or cleaning protocols to the opportunity to work fully from home. In the process of engaging to meet with everyone of those employees. All have been asked to submit medical information and the team is

now sitting with each of those members on Zoom calls to discuss what reasonable accommodations can be made without undue hardship on the district. Non-certified staff are more or less finished and moving on to certified. Have been meeting daily for the past 10 days and will continue on through the next two weeks. Discussing what we can do for staff when we flip back to the hybrid model. Some cases will be the ability to provide a Distance Learning teaching opportunity and those will primarily be focused at elementary level. The question will be can we provide similar accommodations across all levels.

- Have seen a handful of staff seeking assistance through the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) for leave or intermittent leave. Provisions for their health and safety and also provisions for childcare. Anticipate seeing an uptick in those requests when we return to hybrid.
- Reporting obligations continue. In the process of compiling those reports required by the State for 10/1/2020.
- Negotiations continue. Nurses contract expired 7/1/2020. Working under old terms but working closely with the nurses leadership in this interim period and ready to schedule that meeting for the end of September.
- Typically many postings are for back filled positions, people who have left the district and need to be replaced. Consult with administrators, often Central Office and principals. At the building level, administrators are typically responsible for screening applicants. Applitrack is a great function for sorting. Principals create a short list for interviewing. The interview is held with a panel of teachers, principal and the candidate. Candidate is often given a task such as a lesson, live lesson or a writing sample. Panel then makes a recommendation to Central Office. References are checked and certification is checked. Then vetted by Dr. Pascarella, other administrators in Central Office and K. Thompson. K. Thompson then calls to make the offer to potential employees and talk through any questions on certification. It is a very decentralized process but it has the checks and balances of coming through Central Office for the last overlook.
- K. Prunty updated the Board:
  - Made recommendation to start modified practices for athletics starting 9/11/2020 following almost the same protocols from July, with the understanding that will be monitored very closely and if anything changes, adjustment will need to be made.
  - Time has been set up to meet towards the middle of September to see how numbers are trending and metrics, specifically in regards to Labor Day weekend and other schools reopening. Going to see if that has any implications on metrics in Danbury.
- K. O'Dowd updated the Board:
  - Will continue to look at metrics and collaborate with the Health Department and the Community Health Center to offer Covid-19 screening. Have had a number of drive through screening clinics. Helping to get testing numbers up and getting data needed to make a safe evaluation.
  - If K. O'Dowd is notified that there is a student or staff member that has tested positive for Covid-19, she informs Dr. Pascarella, medical advisors and K. Prunty. Have to evaluate case by case basis. Depending on the situation and if it involves

a classroom cohort will have to determine whether to close one classroom, multiple classrooms or an entire building. Sometimes close for presumptive, two to five days, to do proper contact tracing. It is case by case.

- Closure would be if determined to be a positive case. Those students/staff would be sent home to quarantine for 14 days and to be Covid-19 tested.
- J. DaSilva stated that New Milford and Naugatuck High have already closed due to positive cases. We did the right thing by not opening because they have been open less than a week. How are we taking those experiences to influence what we are doing and decision making going forward.
- K. O'Dowd stated that we would be following addendum five which was presented at the Board meeting several weeks ago. We have scenarios from the State on how to respond. We have criteria on how to assess, who goes to the isolation room, who gets sent home and with the responses if they test negative or positive. Again, it is a case by case basis. For instance, at the secondary level, it is not possible to cohort students the way they are cohorted at the elementary level.
- Dr. Pascarella stated that the Commissioner of Education asked what is Danbury doing in terms of returning? Dr. Pascarella stated that we have to follow the law. We will look at data and make an informed decision regarding our situation which is distinctly different from surrounding towns.
- K. Prunty stated that everything is data for us, that is our advantage. We can watch and assess how the community spread is happening and how other schools are handling these situations. We can see if their mitigation plans are working. We want to watch Labor Day and other schools reopening such as private schools and WCSU. We will watch closely and monitor. This will impact how our metrics are going with low, moderate or high risk
- A. Russo asked if our numbers support continued Distance Learning. K. Prunty stated that we have to wait until we can establish a trend. Since we had an outbreak, we have stabilized. Would like to see a downward consistent trend. So at this time, the numbers support Distance Learning.
- R. Jannelli asked if there were budget implications because of the lower number of hired staff this year. K. Thompson stated we are budgeted for the 113. Staff hired are primarily backfilled positions with the exception of student support specialists brought on this year. Shortfall will not create a budget problem.
- K. Conetta asked for numbers of paras and tutors not returning. K. Thompson stated the number is about a dozen. K. Truchsess stated that there were a few more this week so up to a little over 15, but we have sufficient support in the Distance Learning environment. Have also assumed some other roles and responsibilities to support in the paraprofessional union, such as the ISS paras who are not needed in this environment. Have pushed them in to support so that has made up for some of the openings. Effectively utilized resources but will need to backfill those positions when we return in person.
- K. Conetta asked which staff members are currently in school buildings and are teachers supposed to be in buildings during Distance Learning. K. Thompson stated that nurses, custodians, administrators, safety advocates and secretaries are working in the buildings four days a week. Paras and tutors will only work at the

request of the SpEd Department to assist with any of the testing that is happening. Teachers have been invited in if they would like to come in.

- K. Conetta asked if there have been any issues with teachers running lessons remotely out of the building? G. Jasmine stated that she hasn't heard of any issues. At secondary level, there has been consistent connectivity always with every student having at least three devices connecting to the networks. As far as elementary schools, over the summer WiFi access was pushed to be in every classroom. With some of the older buildings, WiFi doesn't go through concrete. Currently installing WiFi access points in every classroom. Anticipate that when students return, they will also have strong connections like the secondary level. Based on the white papers that Google puts out, we should be fine with the connectivity. Never know until we get back in there and will be addressed if needed.
- K. Conetta asked in terms of the Hybrid Model, if there is synchronous teaching and kids streaming at home to that connection, are we prepared with that expansion of the network that we will be able to sustain all that streaming? G. Jasmine stated that Google Classroom doesn't take the bandwidth in streaming that Netflix does so according to Google, we should be fine.
- Dr. Pascarella addressed the issue brought up during public participation:
  - The particular individual never had any other issues presented to DPS. They were made aware of the situation in August. If something like that occurs during the school year, the individual would be placed on leave. In this case, school was not in session. Went through the process where conversation was had and a decision was made to follow the law. In Connecticut, there is the Teacher Dismissal Act and had to follow due process. When the process was started, the person in question then decided to resign. You can't fire someone who no longer works with us. Made proper notification to all of the agencies that needed to know regarding the behavior that was terribly inappropriate, unprofessional, demeaning and not tolerated. This is a personnel matter but Dr. Pascarella addressed it because it was made public.
  - K. Walston stated that he could not help think about some of the work that was discussed during Portrait of a Graduate in the community engagement sessions. What are the hopes, aspirations and dreams that our community has for our young people and what are the skills and mindsets that our children need for success in this rapidly changing and complex world? One of the competencies that continue to resonate was the idea of civic engagement. We, as a school community, have space for growth within this area given the social climate in our country with numerous examples of racism and social injustice. We have been planning to move forward with our commitments and conversations about racial and social injustice as well as opportunities to take on issues that impact gender, gender identity and more. Through the work of Danbury Works, our City has already been involved and engaged in dialogue about social injustice. In DPS, we had started conversations with our admin council at the end of the 2018-2019 school year. Then spoke about responsibilities of our coaches and literacy coaches and folks who impact curriculum. This work was getting deeper into organization and then we had the shut down and some of the planning was put on pause.

Acknowledge that it is time to engage our students and staff more explicitly and continue to deepen the conversation with our administrators in this work. Stark reminder for all of us that if we are going to graduate students who are civically engaged, that we need to be more intentional about what is going on in our country and right here in our own community.

- K. Walston stated that the NAACP has invited DPS to discuss the reopening plan and anticipates conversations on equity and equality.
- Dr. Pascarella stated that he is extremely proud of our staff. Opening face to face is one thing but opening in Distance Learning has been incredible.
- R. Chaleski stated that she heard that by day two, the instructional hours are not enough, particularly at the high school level. Dr. Casimiro stated that the feedback right now is “why are we not in a full six or seven hour day?” and then a few minutes later hearing “too much screen time”. Runs the gamut of opinion. We have done our best to create a balanced program to serve the best interest of kids. We didn’t compare ourselves to surrounding towns in the Spring and we did what was best for Danbury and doing that now as well. Six and a half hours of screen time is not good for students. We are not trying to replicate the traditional school day, we are trying to create a blended learning program that will also service the future as well. Combination of synchronous and asynchronous work.

Asynchronous piece is a level of flexibility that will provide students time and space to perform similar work but where they are able to do so independently. In-person live interactive and what is best served offline and asynchronous. Also trying to do work in Flip Classroom where there is learning in classrooms, instructional modeling and guided practice that is combined in a flip experience. Once students start to log in to Edgenuity programs, they will have some independent practice and independent work in an asynchronous fashion that mirrors and supports the synchronous works as well. That makes up a full and complete instructional day and then some. When we assign students independent work in a classroom while the teachers are working with other students, we can do that asynchronous offline and allow students time and space and when to do that. Far more suited for older students. Once academic stuff starts to kick in, those asynchronous times and FLEX times will be well utilized. Able to offer some support to students who really need that additional one on one to do both but it’s flexible and that is the key to do a good blended learning program. We will continue to evaluate how the scheduling impacts the student outcomes. Will make timely adjustments as necessary.

#### **BOARD CHAIRPERSON’S REPORT**

- G. Cooper stated that there will be a virtual Board Workshop on 9/15/2020 at 6pm and she would like 100%.
- Thanked all Board members for the continued support in communication outreach.
- Elected officials have been coming to the virtual meetings. Reminded all that the procedure is if an elected official would like to be part of a meeting to please call the K. Pompano for the meeting information. Asked Board members not to share the meeting link in the future.

- Dr. Pascarella asked to discuss his goals for this year at the 9/15/2020 workshop.

### **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

**MOTION:** J. DaSilva moved, seconded by K. Conetta that the Board of Education convene in Executive Session for the purpose of discussing negotiations with NEA-Danbury.

**Motion carried at 9:02 pm**

G. Cooper called the meeting to order at 9:05 pm.

Present: Rachel Chaleski, Kate Conetta, Gladys Cooper, Joseph DaSilva, Richard Jannelli, Albert Russo, Amy Spallino, Kathryn Hodgdon, Kathleen Molinaro, Loren Daly

Absent: Joseph Britton

Also Present: T. Mooney, Dr. Pascarella, Courtney Leborious, Kelly Truchsess, Kevin Walston, Dr. Casimiro, Kim Thompson

G. Cooper turned the meeting over to T. Mooney.

T. Mooney continued with the meeting and gave Board members an update on ongoing negotiations with NEA of Danbury.

Q&A ensued.

### **PUBLIC SESSION**

K. Conetta moved, seconded by J. DaSilva that the Board of Education return to Public Session. The motion passed at 9:50 pm.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

K. Conetta, seconded by J. DaSilva that the Board of Education adjourn its Meeting of September 9, 2020 and the meeting was adjourned at 9:50 pm.

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Kathleen Molinaro, Secretary

(Meeting was videotaped)